

7.11 Applying a Lean Approach to the Physiotherapy Management of Exacerbations of COPD in Medical Wards of a Model Four Hospital 1/2.

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Lean healthcare involves minimising waste and increasing value in implementing service improvements. A Lean approach was used to improve the quality of physiotherapy input for patients admitted to hospital with exacerbations of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). This involved piloting an Enhanced Recovery Model for COPD over a 6-week period.

Lean tools were used including the seven wastes, five whys and swimlanes. The root cause was identified as variation in assessment. Training and documentation resources were developed for error-proofing and to align assessment and management with national and international clinical guidelines. Outcomes were measured in a 6-week period prior to the service changes and again for the duration of the 6-week pilot of the Enhanced Recovery Model for COPD. Improved quality and efficiency were evident following implementation, with associated cost savings to the organisation. Decreases in the average length of stay (23.17%), frequency of re-admissions within 90 days (10.14%), a slight decrease in the average number of physiotherapy contacts (1.55%) and an increase in the average duration of physiotherapy contact time (11.62%) were observed. Compliance improved with national guidelines. Lean tools proved useful in root cause identification and providing a structured approach to implementing standardisation, resulting in service quality improvements.

Conflict of Interest: None to declare